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*The Mischiefs of Faction and Rebellion
considered;*

IN A
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE
PARISH CHURCHES
OF
Great and Little Wilbraham,
In the County of *Cambridge,*
ON
Sunday, October 13. 1745.

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TO THE
R E A D E R.

*I*N this time of publick Danger, when all Heads, Hands and Hearts ought to be employed for the Support and Preservation of our present happy Constitution, it will not I hope be thought either unseasonable or impertinent to endeavour to contribute though in the smallest degree towards so good a Work, by putting the following Discourse into the hands of my Parishioners and Neighbours, with a view of its becoming more effectually and extensively useful. I am sensible of its many Defects, but as my Zeal alone for the Publick Good occasions its Publication, so I hope that will plead their Excuse with every candid and ingenuous Reader.

PROV. 17. 14.

*The beginning of Strife is as when
one letteth out Water ; therefore
leave off Contention before it be
meddled with.*

THE Author of this Book was so eminent for his Wisdom and Experience in the World, that without considering him as an inspired Writer, his Counsels are worthy our most serious attention, and will whenever punctually followed, be found to contribute to our ease and quiet, peace and happiness, in an extraordinary degree. A more signal instance of whose excellence, cannot be met with than in the words of the Text, where we are told of the ill consequences of Strife and Contention, and prudently advised to guard against them with the utmost caution. *The beginning of Strife, says he, is as when one*
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letteth out Water, i. e. as when the Banks of a River are cut, the neighbouring Country is immediately o'erflowed, and the Waters cannot easily be reduced into their Channel again; so are the first Breaches between Men, which if not quickly and carefully stop'd, often carry them beyond their primary Intentions, yea sometimes such lengths, as the warmest Imagination could never have conceived. Thoroughly sensible then of this truth, he earnestly exhorts them *to leave off Contention before it be meddled with*; which may be thus paraphrased: — If any occasion of Difference should arise, as from the various situations Men are placed in, and their Passions and Interests sometimes interfering with each other, cannot probably always be avoided, it seems most adviseable to make it up as soon as may be, before it spreads too far, before both Parties have involved themselves in such Difficulties and Troubles, as like a Deluge of Waters will carry Desolation and Destruction along with them.

The lamentable Examples of Unhappiness and Misery in Private Families, arising from a quarrelsome contentious Disposition, are too many

many to suffer us once to doubt of its ill effects ; where it often fatally interrupts all domestick peace and quiet, *dividing the Father-in-law and the Son-in-law, the Daughter-in-law and the Mother-in-law, causing Brethren to betray each other, Children to rise up against Parents, and Parents to deliver up their Children to death.*

But the Mischiefs of this unhappy Temper do not stop here, for it often gives rise to such Contests and Differences between Friends and Neighbours, between Professors of the same Religion (of a Religion too that breaths nothing but Meekness and Gentleness of Spirit into its Votaries) as not only prevent those mutual kind Offices, whereby Life may be rendered agreeable and pleasant, but introduces in their stead illnated Censures and severe Reflections, and occasions them to watch for opportunities of doing ill turns one to another.

And when this Humour is still farther diffused, and instead of discharging itself upon *Particulars*, is disposed to calumniate and interrupt *the regular Administration of the Publick*, it then becomes *Faction* and *Rebellion*;

the ill Consequences of which to a State, as they seem to be more particularly necessary to be considered at this Season, I shall beg leave to enlarge upon, and thence infer the necessity of guarding against the very *beginning of Strife*, of *leaving off Contention before it* has carried us too great lengths, and thereby involved us in such Misery and Slavery, as it may be no easy matter to extricate ourselves out of.

The Usefulness and Necessity of Civil Government cannot but be evident to all ; and they who are sensible of this must likewise know, that upon whatever Foundation it be placed, it can never be supported as it ought, without great regard and deference paid to those in whose hands it is intrusted ; on which account it is that *St. Peter* exhorts *to submit to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governors as unto them that are sent for the Punishment of evil doers, and for the Praise of them that do well**. To shew a forwardness therefore in complaining of their Conduct, without some extraordinary Reasons, can no

* 2 Pet. 13. 14.

way be justified ; it betrays a factious, contentious Disposition, the Mischiefs of which, Men have been too often convinced of by woful experience ever to call in question ; it may not however be amiss occasionally to remind them of them.

And the *first* that offers itself to our consideration is, the Interruption given to Governors in the execution of their Offices, by spreading slanderous and malicious reports of them, and thereby lowering them in the opinion of the People. Now we know that unless Men can be brought to think well of the Integrity and Abilities of the Persons set over them, and thereby be prevailed with to hold them in some degree of esteem, 'tis impossible to keep up their Authority, and that they should see to the execution of the Laws in the manner they ought. The best Government with a weak and contemptible Magistrate at its Head cannot be supported with Dignity ; nor will the compleatest System of Laws avail much to a Nation, when the Dispensers of them have lost their Credit and Reputation. To undermine these then by any wicked and slanderous Insinuations, is doing
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the greatest prejudice to Civil Government, the stability of which has been said in good measure to depend upon them ; to instill groundless Jealousies and Suspensions into Men's minds, is sowing the seeds of future Mischiefs, which oftentimes take such a liking to the soil, and thrive there so vigorously, as to become productive of such variety of Evils as could not easily be foreseen, nor when come to light, prevented, though they are ever so desirous of it. A prudent Man therefore and a Wellwisher to the Peace and Prosperity of his Country, well knowing of what consequence it is to any Society to have its Governors respected, will cautiously avoid every attack of this kind ; and will think it his duty to defend them when any such attempt is made upon their Reputation, unless the Misconduct complained of should be too flagrant to bear a Justification.

Secondly. Men of this turbulent Disposition, who think themselves injured in a few Particulars, and those perhaps really of no great moment if impartially considered, whatever their sentiments of them may be, are often so perverse as to set themselves in opposition to every

every thing proposed, and will suffer nothing right or wrong to pass, till their imaginary Grievances are redressed; by which means the Wheels of Government are so clogged, and those in the Administration brought into such Difficulties, as to be disabled from effectually pursuing Measures calculated for the common Good, and often thereby obliged to take others less advantageous to the Publick. Inasmuch that the Murmurs of querulous dissatisfied Men, instead of remedying (which is ever the end pretended to be had in view) are frequently the occasion of Mismanagement; yea, those very Hardships they so loudly complain of, are not seldom of their own causing, the Magistrate being obliged by the interruption he meets with from such restless Spirits, to take some extraordinary steps, and to make use of rougher methods of compassing his ends than he at first proposed.— It should seem then far more adviseable to make allowance for small Mistakes, to submit patiently to little Inconveniences, than to endeavour by secret Whispers or open Clamours, to give any obstruction to the Government, and by that means, undesignedly perhaps, give rise to such Disturbances, as you can never tell what will be the
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end of: for when these are once set on foot, you cannot say, Thus far shall ye go and no farther; they often exceeding the Imagination in their Career, and like Waters broke loose overturn every thing in their way, scattering far and wide Misery and Ruin.

But *Thirdly*. The Mischiefs of this factious discontented Spirit are not bounded here; these Murmurs and Complaints, these Slanders and Reproaches, are only a sort of Prelude to Acts of Violence. Hence the Peace of a Nation is fatally interrupted, Parties are formed full of Rage and Animosity against each other, who scruple not taking any Methods just or unjust, of maintaining and defending themselves, whilst they blame the wisest Measures of their Antagonists, and magnify every little Oversight to a prodigious degree. Wicked and ill-designing Men lose no opportunity of cherishing and fomenting these Divisions, and often by subtle Insinuations lead Men unwittingly as it were so far in their pernicious Schemes, before they perceive their ill tendency and bad consequences, that even when they do see them, they begin to think it too late to retract, and so through fear are made
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instruments of executing their most horrid Enterprizes, against the Dictates of their own Consciences. And when by such Artifices as these, Men are wrought up to a proper pitch, open Hostilities commence, Misery and Desolation soon spread themselves over the face of a Country, whilst its Inhabitants instead of minding their proper Employments are up in Arms against each other; and what is shocking even to think of, Men of the same Nation, of the same Neighbourhood, yea possibly of the same Religion too, are seen embruining their hands in one another's Blood. And when things are once come to these extremities, Magistrates soon lose their Authority, the Laws themselves are trampled under-foot, and the end thereof is often the endangering the Establishment both in Church and State.

By such intestine Commotions as these, the best constituted Government, built upon the firmest and most durable Foundations, the Work of Ages in bringing to Perfection, and which might have preserved a People who knew their own Interest, happy for many Generations, is sometimes suddenly overturned, as it were *by a rushing mighty Wind*: — When

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behold, instead of that Calm and Quiet, these Disturbers of Mankind flattered their Adherents would soon be obtained by a resolute pursuit of their Measures, instead of a Redress of Grievances and a Removal of Old Evils, a new Scene of Miseries presents itself, more terrible by far than those heretofore complained of. Anarchy and Confusion lead the Van, Injustice and Oppression follow, whilst Slaughter and Desolation with a long Train of Calamities bring up the Rear.

Farther ill consequences of these unhappy Dissentions are the interruption of Trade, the neglect of Agriculture, and in short a discouragement of all kind of Industry and Learning. For whilst the Manufacturer sees all things in Disorder and Confusion about him, and cannot be assured of reaping the fruits of his Industry, he is too apt to become careless and negligent, and despairing of Advancement by fair and honest means, is easily induced, in hopes of Plunder, to join with the Robbers and Spoilers of his Country. The Merchant in like manner is discouraged from the pursuit of Foreign Trade, by the little prospect he has of securing his Wealth when it is come home.

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And the Husbandman from sowing his Fields and planting Vineyards, by the uncertainty of reaping their Produce, whilst licentious Armies take upon them *to gather where they have not strowed, to reap where they sowed not.* And the Progress and Advancement of Learning must be effectually discouraged, whenever Men are deprived of the liberty of thinking and judging freely for themselves, whenever its just Rewards are either withheld or converted to serve the purposes of Superstition, or whenever they are bestowed upon Persons who have no other merit to recommend them, than that arising from their factious seditious Behaviour. And in such violent Disorders as these, Religion itself seldom escapes unmolested; its pure and primitive Rites and Doctrines are made to give place to such as are of Men's Invention, to such as are calculated to promote their own Worldly ends, rather than God's glory. Its sacred Edifices too are often plundered and profaned, whilst its Professors are treated with contempt and ignominy by superstitious Zealots, who in their Rage and Bigotry pretend to do God service in propagating their Religion, by such Methods as are destructive of all Religion, whilst they vainly rob their Creator of the

Honour due unto him alone, by transferring it to his Creatures.

These are some few of the manifold Evils arising from intestine Broils and Contention, these the general consequences of popular Rage and Fury, when all restraint is removed, and they are suffered to display themselves in their own proper form ; which lest you should be so unfortunate as to experience, lest seduced by base and treacherous Counsellors, you should be brought into the same calamitous Circumstances, both my Duty towards you, and Instructions from my Diocesan, oblige me in a particular manner to warn you against, at a time when (I speak it with the greatest concern) many of His Majesty's Subjects led by some fatal Blindness, are in open Rebellion against Him ; and who have not only taken up Arms, but already plunged them in the Bowels of such, as have by their opposition, shewed themselves true Friends to their King and Country, in favour of a Person, whom the Laws of the Land, their own Interest, *if rightly considered*, and the most solemn Oaths had laid under the strongest obligations to resist. And now encouraged by the Success they have hitherto met with, they increase

crease in Numbers, and are in daily expectation of Foreign Succours, with which no doubt they mean to advance towards us, in order to rob us of our Liberties, Properties, Religion and every thing that is dear or valuable to a freeborn People, unless timely and powerfully opposed. For what less than this can be expected from one, who should conquer us by the Assistance of a Nation which has on every occasion shewn itself our most inveterate Enemy; from one who has been trained up all his life long in States where the most Arbitrary Government prevails; and from one who must himself whether he would or not, become subservient to those who lend him Succours; we must I say from a free and happy People, if we knew wherein Happiness consisted, become a Nation of Slaves.

And not only our Liberties but our Properties would likewise be hereby endangered, for the Aiders and Abettors in such a Conquest as this, we may well imagine would be for the most Men of desperate Fortunes, and who would undoubtedly demand Rewards suitable to such desperate Undertakings; with which they could only be gratified out of the Spoils
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of those who had ever heretofore shewn and should particularly on this occasion approve themselves faithful Subjects to their King and true Lovers of their Country; not to insist upon the dreadful Waste and Desolation that would unavoidably be made by the Ravages of Foreign Armies, with which a Dominion thus acquired could only be supported.

But these are not all the Losses we should sustain, for our Religion too (which every Man ought to esteem above Life and Property) must be parted with; that Religion which God's Providence hath so long preserved in these Nations pure and uncorrupt, must then give place to one, abounding with superstitious Rites and erroneous Doctrines, to one calculated for the support of Worldly Pomp and Grandure, and what is worst of all, to one of such a cruel, unchristian, persecuting Spirit, that it spares no one that will not comply with it; as we may be too sensibly convinced by looking over the Annals of that unmerciful Reign of Queen *Mary*, when almost every day presented some new Scene of Blood and Horror; or if we wanted examples of this at Home, the Massacre of the Protestants in *France* begun soon

soon after, would furnish us with a most dreadful one from Abroad. *

I doubt not large Promises have been, and will be made, that none of these things shall again happen; but every one who is in the least acquainted with the genius of the Romish Religion, must know, that it obliges not to keep faith with Hereticks, as they are so charitable as to stile us, and therefore there can be no dependance on such Promises. Yea, were they really desirous of keeping them, it would not be in their power, since they would be so constantly importuned to break them by the Emissaries of that Church of which they profess themselves Members, that it would be impossible to resist effectually, or if they did, they would be sure of suffering for it by some secret Treachery; such are the Spirit and Temper of those who call themselves Catholicks, and such the Methods of propagating their Superstition.

If therefore we have any abhorrence of Slavery whether of Body and Mind, or any

* Begun at *Paris* in the year 1572, in which according to *Thuanus* Thirty-thousand were cut off, according to others more.

value for our happy Constitution both of Church and State, and are willing to put a speedy stop to all the Miseries and Calamities of a Civil War (which God knows of how long continuance it may otherwise be) we must heartily join in supporting the present Family upon the Throne ; which is, whatever may have been maliciously suggested to the contrary, the only way of continuing to *Us* and our *Posterity*, those invaluable Blessings of Liberty and Peace, we have hitherto enjoyed under their Protection.

If we are wise enough to take warning by the dreadful Misfortunes that have happened to our Forefathers, and which are recorded for our Admonition, we may easily infer the present necessity of pursuing the Wise Man's advice, *in leaving off Contention before it be meddled with*, in putting a stop to it before it is got to too great a Head, well weighing this, " that when
 " Men are once become guilty, the Laws of
 " a Kingdom do as naturally prevent their re-
 " turn to their Duty, as the Banks of a River
 " oppose the return of that overflowing Water,
 " they had before confined within its proper
 " Bounds."

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Let this Truth then be always so deeply impressed upon our Minds, as not only effectually to prevent making way for those Floods of Rage and Fury so destructive to a State, which often discompose its Frame, yea sometimes overturn its very Foundations, but also engage us in a steady adherence to our present Establishment, and in the constant pursuit of the Welfare and Happiness of our Country. Which if as we ought, we made our constant practice, Occasions of Contention would rarely happen, they never could but when our Privileges were grossly invaded, which under a King ever tender of our Rights and Properties, and withall strictly attached to our Laws and Constitution, no one can with justice say has ever happened, or that there seems the least reason to be apprehensive may happen.

To instill therefore into Men's Minds groundless Fears and Jealousies (for such I cannot but look upon any that may have been of late insinuated) to murmur and repine at at the present mild and gentle Administration, and to be so extreme as *to mark all that is done amiss*, without making any allowance for the smallest Mistakes, must be both offensive to

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God, *by whom Kings reign, and who hath commanded us to honour them*, and in the nature of things the greatest bar to our own Welfare and Prosperity. But any Domestick Dissentions must be more particularly mischievous at a Season, when we have so many Foreign and powerful Enemies to contend with, who will gladly take every advantage of our Divisions, and be pleased to see us weaken ourselves, and open a Breach wherein they may enter and take possession.

But God forbid they should be thus far gratified, or we so imprudent as to favour their most ardent Wishes by a want of Harmony amongst ourselves ; No, rather warned of the fatal consequences of unnatural Heats and Animosities from those in the last Century, be taught to avoid falling into the like Confusions, and to live peaceably and amicably together ; and from the consideration of our Contests being no more about Superiority of Parties, or things of small moment, but whether we shall any longer with freedom enjoy our Lives and Fortunes, our Laws and Religion, our Wives and Children, or submit to the basest conditions of Slavery, let us instantly resolve to *quit ourselves like Men*, and laying aside all private
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Resentment and invidious Distinctions, endeavour with united Forces, with one Heart and one Mind to repel the *common Enemy*, and to support His Majesty *King GEORGE* in all his just and lawful Rights.

I might here have reminded you of the Valour and Bravery of your Ancestors, and added many other strong and powerful Motives, if I had thought them wanting to rouse your Courage, and animate you farther in this glorious Cause; but those already mentioned, if duly attended to, cannot fail of having a proper Influence upon every True *Briton*, nor when joined with hearty Prayers to Almighty God, rendered acceptable by the amendment of your Lives, for Success against all your Enemies both at *Home* and *Abroad*, of gaining his Protection, and then *you need not fear what Man can do unto you.*

THE END.



